

PRAYER:
THE SOUL'S SINCERE DESIRE

JOHN JABEZ LANIER

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Prayer: The Soul's Sincere Desire

By

REV. JOHN J. LANIER, B.D.

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TO
THE BROTHERHOOD OF SAINT ANDREW



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NECESSITY OF PRAYER

And after he had sent the multitudes away, he departed into the mountain apart to pray.—Matt. 14:23.

I

NECESSITY OF PRAYER

It was the custom of Jesus in the midst of his busy and engrossing work to steal away from the multitudes to the quiet of the mountain solitudes in order to put away the distracting cares, exacting work, and fatiguing toils of the streets and market places. This custom of his is founded on the necessities of human nature which needs to turn away from our busy activities of getting something to eat, drink, and wear or we should soon lose the consciousness of other needs. Without this spiritual rest and refreshment we should soon lose the sense of communion with God and at last lose the spiritual stimulus which enables us to perform our duties in the most acceptable and efficient manner.

Jesus had the sense and certainty of God at all times and under all circumstances. In order for him thus to live and transfigure his toil with God's presence as the sun floods the earth with its sunshine

he would send the multitudes away and depart into the mountains to pray.

But with Jesus prayer was not the end of praying. It had vital connection with his daily life. He prayed in the mountains that he might be able to work in the plains. He worked so well because he prayed so well. He prayed in the mountains that he might be able to bear up under the heat, burden, and strain of the work in the plains, might not be overcome by life's discouragements, might remain pure when in conflict with sin, might overcome when tempted, and be able to say, "I have done all things well."

For the same purpose and to meet the same necessities of human nature Jesus taught us to pray and faint not. He also taught us not to think that our duty ends with prayer but that prayer gives us the inspiration to do well the duties of our daily lives; to put joy into duty, to take away the exasperating friction of life, and lighten the burdensomeness of its oppression.

We may fall into the danger of thinking that prayer is both the end and means of spiritual life. It is the means and not the end. It occupies the

same relation to us that the departures of Jesus into the mountains to pray did to him. As the college is but a preparation for life's duties, so is prayer. If the child were to think that the college were established for itself, and not a place in which he is prepared to perform life's duties manfully and well, he would make the same mistake Christians may make concerning prayer.

Our Saviour knew that it is much easier for us to make great professions of religion than to live it. Therefore he taught us to commune often with God so that religion would sink so deep into our hearts that we could not help living it. This is the meaning and purpose of prayer.

It had this effect upon Moses. After he had spent forty days and nights in the mountains his face shone with the reflected glory of God. So through prayer the reflected glory of God shines in the renewed faith of our souls, the increased hope of our hearts, and in the valiant fight with the Philistines in the plains.

Elijah spent forty days in the mountains with the Lord. After the earthquake and storm had rent the mountains, the still small voice came saying, "What

doest thou here, Elijah?" So when during our prayers we hear the same still small voice saying, "What doest thou here?" we answer: "Lord, that we may meet with thee, have our sins forgiven, and receive increased courage to serve thee and our fellow men more and more."

Jesus spent forty days in the mountains fasting and praying and communing with God. As the result he was able to say, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" Our prayers enable us to say too, get thee hence, Satan, expel the dark shadow of his presence from our hearts, and bring the brightness of overshadowing angels to minister to us.

The forty days that Moses spent in the mountains, the forty days that Elijah spent in the mountains, the forty days that Jesus spent in the mountains were the preparation for another meeting in another mountain — the mountain of transfiguration. "And they looked and behold Moses and Elijah were with him, and his raiment became exceeding white as snow, and he was transfigured before them."

FOR CHRIST SAKE

II

FOR CHRIST SAKE

One peculiarity about the prayers of Christians is that they end with "for Christ sake," or "through Christ Jesus our Lord." This is not done to close our prayers with a magical phrase or to teach that God hears and answers prayer only for the sake of Jesus apart from our own sakes.

When we close our prayers with "for Christ sake" is there lurking in our minds any such idea as God will not grant my prayer for my sake but he will for the sake of Christ? Do we place Christ in any such relation as God loves Christ and Christ loves us? So we will ask Christ. He will prevail with God to grant our petitions not for our sakes but for the sake of his Son who asks him and because he asks him.

If we have such an idea as this it originated in the following manner. We often wish to ask a

favor of a person who cares nothing about us personally and will not grant the favor if we personally ask it. So we single out some one who is a friend of ours and at the same time is a friend of the person from whom we wish to ask the favor. We go to this person and say: "I wish such a person to grant me a favor. He will not do it for me but he will do it for you."

This is done every day, and human society could scarcely exist without it. It has its necessary, useful, and beneficent part to play in human affairs, and will continue to exist because of our ignorance of one another, because of our greater love of one person than for another person, and because of the obligations we owe to one person that we do not owe to others. For these reasons we shall continue to do things for one person for the sake of another person that we will not do for the person himself.

We recognize the justice in human affairs of doing things for one person for the sake of another person; not only its justice but its beneficence; not only its beneficence but its necessity. For if you do me a favor that favor puts me under obligation to do you a favor; not only to do you a favor but to

grant a favor to a friend of yours whether he is a personal friend of mine or not. This is true in politics, society, and business.

But here note an important difference and distinction between things human and divine. We human beings are under obligations to one another, which, if we fail to fulfil to the extent of our ability, we cease to be honorable men. But God is under obligations to none on account of favors received. God gives all favors, man receives all favors; and therefore is under a double obligation, first to God the giver of all, and second to make others less favored than ourselves participators in all that God has given us.

Is God then under no obligations? Yes: of the most stringent and adamant kind because he is under obligations to himself to do nothing unworthy of his infinite wisdom, power, and love. Yes: because God is under obligations to himself there are certain things he cannot do and be God — to show partiality, to do things for Christ's sake which he will not do for our sakes. I repeat that God must be impartial in order to maintain his own self-respect. No general can show partiality and maintain

either his own self-respect or that of his troops. And as God is infinitely perfect the obligation in him to be impartial infinitely transcends that of man.

But do not the facts of life everywhere contradict the impartiality of God? Is not God very partial in the bestowal of his gifts? Are not some born mental and spiritual millionaires while others are born paupers in every sense of the word?

It is at once granted that people are born in this world in all stages of development from the brute man to God incarnate. While all this is freely granted, and also that an unequal bestowal of gifts would seem to a superficial look to be an evidence of the partiality of God, a deeper insight reveals that God is without respect of persons, and that what he does for the sake of one person he does for the sake of all.

There are several ways of looking at these inequalities among men which will enable us to see the wisdom and love of God in them instead of what the possible distortion of a jaundiced eye may call the partiality of God.

First, let me call your attention to the fact that

no one has a monopoly of the good things of God. Lest we be puffed up with pride, with every gift God sends a thorn in the flesh, and the more beautiful the gift the sharper the thorn. Perhaps the ugliest thing in the world has the most beautiful eye. As Shakespeare says, "the jewel of an eye in the ugly and venomous toad." The sweetest songsters come clad in simplest vests while birds of the most brilliant plumage have no songs at all. Emerson has most beautifully shown this in a poem, *The Mountain and the Squirrel*, which concludes with the squirrel saying to the mountain, "If I cannot carry a forest on my back, neither can you crack a nut." No one has all the good gifts of God. And do not forget that with every special gift there goes an especially sharp thorn, that you cannot have the gift without being stuck with the thorn—and sometimes killed by it.

Second, the world is made richer by distributing different gifts to different individuals. One has poetical gifts, another has music, another painting, or sculpture, or architecture. One has inventive genius, another has oratorical gifts, another statesmanship, another legal abilities, and so on ad infinitum

until the world's life becomes inconceivably rich and varied. All these varied and diversified gifts not only make the lives of the individuals who possess them illustrious but the world's life illustrious, my life and your life illustrious if we will have it so.

Third, this diversity of gifts makes the world move faster and the tide of life rise higher in every individual if he will have it so. Merely to state this fact is for you to see that it is so. Mr. Edison makes the invention of the electric light to-day and to-morrow the world is lighted by it. Another man invents the telephone and on the morrow we hear the voices of our friends across the continents. Mr. Kipling is inspired to write a great poem and on the morrow the world is inspired with his great thoughts. A person on a far away continent commits an act of heroism or self-sacrifice and scarcely has the act been committed before the telegraph and the printing press make our souls throb with the same heroism and sacrifice.

Lastly, consider what would be the consequences did we not have these diversities of gifts in different individuals and in different races. If every man were forced to write his own poems, build his own

house, make his own religion, it would mean that these things would not be done at all. These things can be done only by those who have special gifts for these things and devote their lives unreservedly to these special activities. These men make the world move, and move rapidly, so rapidly that if we keep up with them we must march in double quick time.

We have found that what at first sight seemed an evidence of the partiality of God, upon closer examination and deeper insight, is seen to be most impartial, helpful, and for all. We have seen that God has no partial gifts and no special favorites. When he sends a gifted man into the world he is not a privilege to be patented for his own special benefit but for the enrichment of the whole world; for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

God loves him the most who like him the giver of all gives himself the most. And he who gives himself the most shall grow none the less by the giving, for every act of giving to another develops more mind and heart and brain in the giver, and still greater capacities of receiving the inflowing life of God. Only he who empties himself can be

filled, only he who gives all can receive all. To eradicate selfishness in us and create Christlikeness in us is the moral and spiritual purposes of all God's educational and disciplinary purposes with us in this world; not to lift a few special favorites to this exalted station of life, understand you, but all men; not only Jesus but all men.

A person once said to me: "I believe that God loves me for myself, for my own sake, and will give me anything that I ask him if it is for my best good. And for this reason," said he, "I always leave off *for Christ sake*." And I replied, "If these words meant the same thing to me that they do to you I would always leave them off too; but because they do not mean this to me but always have another and deeper meaning I always add them."

Continuing, I replied, "Did it ever occur to you that we do not plant peach, apple, or pear trees for the sake of the trees but for the sake of the fruit? If the tree year after year bears only leaves and branches, and there is no possibility of its bearing fruit, then 'why cumbereth it the ground? Cut it down and cast it into the fire.'"

In the light of this barren fig tree, "for Christ

sake" is lit up with a wonderful meaning. This meaning is that we never do anything for the sake of a half-finished product. The sculptor does not patiently toil from day to day, chipping away the roughness of the tough marble block, for the sake of the uncouth ugliness of the half-finished statue but for the sake of the glorious beauty the statue will have when finished. It is for the sake of this, and for the confidence that he will at last carve this statue, embodying his ideal in stone, that he works tirelessly on and on.

We are but the half-finished product of the workmanship of God, some of us hideous enough. Not for our present selves are we kept alive — God forbid — not for our present selves are we kept alive and have the right to ask for greater blessings than we have, for we are often not worthy of the ones we already have. Our supreme prayer, when we learn how to pray, is for our future possible selves, for the finished product we shall be when the divine artist shall have given us the last finishing touches of perfection. Not for such animal, sensual creatures as we are, if we are content to rest in what we are, does God give us light, life, being, and a uni-

verse, but for the future possibilities in us, Christ in us the hope of glory, the end for which we are created!

The glory of prayer is for Christ sake — the end, glory, and perfection of man. We identify ourselves with Christ, looking forward to the time when the fulness of his statue shall be wrought in us. To pray for Christ sake is to pray for our utmost spiritual exaltation in God.

To pray in reality for Christ sake is a cry to almighty God from the deepest depths of our souls to bring to perfection the infinite aspirations we feel within us, to slake the thirst and satisfy the longing we have for infinite life.

To pray for Christ sake is to confess that there is not time enough in this life nor room enough in this world for our spirits to reach consummation, is to confess that the value of this life is in its promise not in its fulfilment, simply as a beginning not as an end. "So many promising youths, never a perfect man," says Emerson. Not because so many fail to fulfil the promise of their youth, but because no earthly fulfilment can possibly realize what youth predicts.

To pray for Christ sake is not to utter a selfish prayer, is not to pray for gifts and powers for selfish gratification, but for gifts and powers to be nobly used for others as Christ used all his gifts and powers for us.

To pray for Christ's sake is to make a confession and a promise in one. It is to confess that we are sinners, that for the sake of our present selves we are not worthy of the blessings we have, and the ones for which we are asking. It is a promise that, in the strength of the increased spiritual inflow of divine life and power for which we pray, we will become in the future more obedient and fruitful children of God, as we grow more and more into the likeness of him in whose name and for whose sake we pray.

PRAYER NATURAL, INSTINCTIVE, AND
UNIVERSAL

III

PRAYER NATURAL, INSTINCTIVE, AND UNIVERSAL *

What is the use of prayer after all? Is there any good in prayer? Is there any reality in it? Are we indeed speaking into the ear of God or simply articulating into air?

As you are well aware there are tendencies all about us which seem to militate against prayer; and most of them might be summarised in some such statement as this: as natural law is uniform in its working, effect following cause with unerring regularity of sequence and occurrence, prayer is an occurrence contrary to the laws of nature.

But it seems to me this is precisely what prayer is not. If prayer is contrary to the laws of nature, we at once ask: what nature? and whose nature? It is not contrary to my nature. It is not contrary

* After Bishop Greer and Dr. W. S. Rainsford.

to your nature. It is not contrary to human nature in general, for in all ages men have prayed; and judging the future by the past, as long as human nature remains human nature, men will continue to pray.

It is the one thing we see everywhere and hear everywhere — in the song of the Parsee priest on the top of the Persian mountains, in the sound of the Mussulman's cry breaking forth with the sunrise from the turret's slope of the mosk; in Moham-medanism, in Buddhism, in the monotheism of the Jew, in the militarism of the Roman, in the fetichism of the African — the voice of prayer is heard.

What is the story of human life in the past but the story of religion, and if of religion then of prayer. It is the story of human life trying to come to itself through a power outside of itself; and somehow to tell itself — its deepest, inmost, most secret self — into the ear of the sympathetic God.

And not only in the past do we hear it, but in the story of the present do we hear it. The voice of prayer is heard in all lands to-day, not only among people who call themselves religious, but among people who do not call themselves religious, who

yet in spite of themselves are a little religious at times. They cannot get God out of their thoughts, nor can they keep him out of their speech. The instinct of God is in their minds and they cannot get rid of it.

And this instinct of God which is in man carries with it the instinct of appeal to God. And they do appeal to God; not always reverently, but sometimes profanely, using his name as a name with which to curse and swear. But what is cursing and swearing but the instinct in them of prayer, of appeal to God gone mad, because they have gone mad and angry for the moment; the instinct in them of prayer blasphemously expressed.

Prayer is an irrepressible and an ineradicable instinct of man. It shows itself in wrath, in anger, in love, in death, in sudden escape from danger, in sudden escape from death, when involuntarily we are moved to say and cannot help saying, thank God! as though he did it, and we feel and know that he did it. Or when touched with some emotion beyond the common wont of gladness or joy, which we know not how to express, or how to tell it to others, the heart goes up to God as though it would share it with

him and say to him: *Ah!* see, as no one else can see, my gladness and my joy!

Or when in some hour of need, confronting some difficult or perilous task which we have not the energy to perform and yet must perform, without any human guidance and without any human aid, treading the wine press all alone in darkness and in weariness, with none to help or understand or bring deliverance unto us, the cry goes up to God for help, the appeal to God is made!

Prayer contrary to the laws of nature? Why it is the law of nature, of human nature at least, which lives, breathes, and has its being in prayer; which is forever, reverently or irreverently, sacredly or profanely, silently or vocally, somehow appealing to God; swearing in his name, protesting in his name, deprecating, imprecating, expostulating in his name, forever carrying up its great cause in equity to God as unto the highest and ultimate tribunal and court of appeal.

Contrary to the laws of nature? Why more than any thing else it is our nature. It ripples through all of our laughter, it shines through all of our tears; it shows itself in all our weakness, makes stronger

our strength, and quickens within us the dream of some ideal life, not seen as yet but believed in, towards which we press on, towards which we now aspire as the home of the soul in God. In human nature at least I say that there is no other law so imperiously dominant, so supremely transcendent, so universally prevalent, as the instinct of prayer; and we can no more get rid of it than human nature can get rid of human nature.

And upon that world of human nature which is said to have come out of all the rest of nature, to be its blossomed outgrowth with the instinct of prayer in it, we take our stand and pray, and leave results to him who is greater and wiser than we, and who has made it a law of our being, a law of nature to pray. I want you to feel how right, how reasonable prayer is; and that you are not turning from the light of nature, as knowledge reveals it to you, when you turn to the light of God revealed in Christ.

I would deepen in you the conviction that it is the opening up of your heart not only to the human but divine environment of your souls, that you can reach the full stature of your personal development

and make the most of yourselves only when you do so. Let God make you strong and then you are strong with a strength that will prove itself so often to be an invincible strength which opposition and difficulty will only more fully bring out.

Let us now for a moment consider the meaning and significance of the universality of prayer in estimating its reasonableness, its reality, and its age-long use among men. If there is no reality in prayer, if it does not bring down from the Father of spirits light in times of darkness, strength in times of weakness, and help when that of man faileth, you convict not one man, not one race, not one age, but all men, races, and ages since time began of delusion and folly. And you are convicting not the weak minded, not the ignorant, not the superstitious and the mystics, but such soldiers of action and robust common sense as Washington and Lee, to mention no more. All the great poets, statesmen, and artists, and musicians, unite their testimony to the fact that the earnest prayer of the righteous man availeth much.

There is one word which I have been constantly using and for a definite purpose. I do not know

whether you have noticed it or not; but the word which I have been using is that prayer is an irrepressible *instinct* of man. And what shall we say about the comparative value of reason and instinct? Which is the higher and more divine? When our reason and instinct clash, one pointing in one direction and the other pointing in another direction, which ought we to obey? I have no hesitation in saying that instinct is a higher and a better guide than reason, for instinct is the divine voice in bird, beast, and man, while reason is but the human voice, the latest and most imperfectly developed of all man's faculties and powers. Instinct is the divine voice and command. Reason is the articulate voice and rational expression of instinct which it can never supersede nor transcend. Instinct is always the master and reason is always the servant.

The great things in this world are never reasoned out first. They are done instinctively and reasoned out afterwards. The great love of Jonathan for David was not according to reason but against reason and according to instinct. Instinct is at the bottom of, and is the irresistible motive power of, all great love, actions, and deeds. It has written

and will continue to write all the great poems, it has fought and will continue to fight all the great wars, and has been and is the guardian angel which keeps pure, separate, and distinct the races of the world.

To know a man or woman you must get much deeper than his or her reasons. Your instinct determines what you will think, say, and do in all the great crises of life. The instinct is the man or the woman in all of us. Deep down in the heart of every person born in the world, very much deeper than our understanding, very much deeper and more trustworthy than our reason, there is implanted by the God who makes us the great primal, universal, and inevitable instinct to believe in God and pray to him.

In saying all this about instinct, and the part it plays in making us what we are, I am not uttering my own dictum or private opinion but the settled conviction of the great thinkers of the world. As the years roll round and our experience deepens the great part that instinct plays in making the destiny of man grows more and more certain. Every generation of thinkers adds increasing weight to the

transcendent masterfulness of the instincts of the world.

It is simply a truism of science to say that there is no such thing as instinct aimed amiss. Instinct is ever purposeful for it is the voice of God in bird, beast, and man. Wherever you turn to nature she holds her life by virtue of her obedience to instinct. For instance, far in the south the martins winter. In the spring they leave the warm glades where the waters are smooth and the insects are plentiful, and fly north in the teeth of the cold wind from the great barren tundras of Labrador; they will go north against sleet and snow to a river far up in New Brunswick where the ice lies on the river's bank and where the sun's rays do not reach. From the warm sunny south, and the plentiful feed, these little birds find their way through the inclement storms of the north to the banks of the northern river to build their summer nests. Why do they do it? Does any man, wise as he may be, say, martins never would leave this land of plenty to go to a land of cold? There is danger in the long journey, in which many may die. But God, nature, any way you can put it, has put instinct in these little feathered

breasts, and if that instinct is denied or defeated for one single season the whole of that feathered tribe would die.

Wherever you look the reverent student will tell you that nature knows no such thing as instinct aimed amiss, and for the best of reasons as soon as we know how instinct is created. *Instinct is not created by the subjective desires of the creature alone but in combination with the objective powers of God and the world of nature. Therefore it is impossible to have an instinct for which there is no gratification and no answer in God and the world of nature.* For instance, what creates thirst and hunger? Food and water in the world of nature. If there was no such thing as food and water in the world of nature there neither could nor would be any such thing as hunger and thirst in us.

Therefore if I have a desire or instinct I know that there is something in the world of nature which answers to and gratifies this desire because the objective facts of the world of nature create this instinct or desire in my soul. It is the absence in us of something objective in the world necessary for our existence that creates instincts and desires of all

kinds. It matters not whether this is conscious or unconscious, the fact remains, and is the explanation of why the new born baby seeks its mother's breast and man the aid and help of God in prayer.

And so we come to the old, old instinct implanted in the heart of man to pray and faint not; for birds and animals and every thing that grows and lives, including man, hold and maintain their lives by virtue of these strange longings and appetites we call instincts which are created by the need and absence of answering and sustaining forces and powers of the universe. So when I find these mighty instincts surging and rising in my heart, when I find longings in my soul that the earth cannot satisfy, when I find hopes that the world cannot gratify, I know that I did not create these aspirations and hopes in my soul, but that they are implanted in my heart by him who answers them and to them; and whatever my understanding or reason may or may not say, I obey this imperious God-implanted instinct of prayer by lifting up my voice to him who has all things needful for the body as well as the soul, and is always more ready to hear than we to pray.

THE RATIONALE OF PRAYER

The supplication of the righteous man availeth much in its working.— James 5: 16.

IV

THE RATIONALE OF PRAYER

The Authorized Version translates James 5:6 differently from the Revised Version. I use the translation of the Revised Version because it brings out the meaning of the original much better than the Authorized Version. The translation of the Authorized Version is: "The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much." Of course the *effectual* prayer cannot help *availing* much for if it did not do so it would not be effectual. This is not what the author says nor the meaning which he intends to convey. The meaning of the passage is contained in the word which is translated by the word *working* which is the translation of the Greek word *energoumene*. This word *energoumene* means *energy*, *power*. St. James says that the prayer of the righteous man is an energetic power, some of whose effects he describes. Prayer is a power, a force, as much so as gravitation, magne-

tism, electricity, telepathy, and thought; but transcends them all. Through the power of prayer we make the spiritual power of God our power.

In the modern world there is a disposition to scout, decry, and disuse things in religion which cannot be made perfectly plain and reasonable to our understanding, often to an understanding which does not wish to understand, and will not understand if it can possibly help it. It is thoroughly irrational to have this attitude towards religion when we do not have it towards anything else which we do not understand. For instance we have the power to eat a piece of bread and turn it into blood, bone, and muscle. Do we understand how it is done? And because we do not understand how it is done are we going to stop eating? Or take magnetism, gravitation, or electricity — who understands these things and the mysteries of their workings? And because we do not perfectly understand these things are we going to stop using them? No, you say: this would be suicidal folly gone mad. The same thing is true in regard to the great facts of religion. Let us be just and rational about all things whether they be material or spiritual.

In the earlier ages of the world men instinctively used the mighty force of prayer and did not bother their brains about understanding it. And the beauty and divineness about the powers of God are that, if we use them, they work just as well when we do not understand them as when we understand them. The powers of digestion go on just as well in an ignorant person as in the greatest scientist who knows very much more about it. Prayer acts in the same way. It is just as effective in the humblest person, provided he is pure hearted, as in the profoundest intellectual giant.

The trouble, however, is not in prayer itself but in widely prevalent ideas about prayer, and in explanations of prayer, and in reasons why we should pray that cause most of the trouble. The reason is not found in prayer itself; for prayer is too universal, natural, and instinctive, and has been used too long to admit of such an explanation.

The age, as I have said, demands that every thing be explained, but a false explanation in religion is to many people more disastrous than in any thing else. For instance, in the early ages people explained the relations of the heavenly bodies. We

know to-day that many of their explanations are untrue and grotesque in the extreme. We do not deny the truth of astronomy because of this but quietly put their explanations aside and still go on believing in astronomy. No great harm is done. The same is true in regard to all the sciences — physiology, chemistry, botany, zoology. The earliest attempts to explain these subjects are so wildly fantastic in many respects that we often look upon them in wonder and then quietly sweep them into the dust heaps. But no harm is done for we still go on believing in the human body, in the elements of nature, the mysteries of plants and animals, until better equipped and more cautious and careful thinkers give us more accurate science.

The same thing ought to be true in regard to religion but it is not. A false explanation in religion is always more or less disastrous to a large number of people. The reason of this is that the *explanation* and the *thing itself* become so intertwined that they seem to stand or fall together. A good many people at this time cannot believe some of the ideas taught them about prayer, some of the reasons given why they should pray, and the explanations

that attempt to explain prayer. As a result of this many think that they cannot believe in prayer and must stifle the divine instinct God has implanted in us to pray. Here is where the trouble comes in and is why, as I have said, a false explanation is more disastrous in religion than elsewhere.

Many people do not look upon prayer as a power which they use like gravitation, electricity, magnetism, and thought; but they look upon prayer as magic, and as contrary and contradictory to all other forces we use and control as when Aladdin touched his lamp and the genii appeared, and as incapable and defiant of all reason as that Arabian tale. This is just what I believe that prayer is not. It takes its place among the other forces and powers of God that we use, and is just as reasonable, that is, just as readily admits of an explanation as any other force and power.

You will understand what I mean when I say that the power of thought alone never moved one particle of matter. Neither does prayer, apart from its power to influence some other spirit, do so. I might think for a thousand years and never be able to think a book off its shelf by the powers of mind

alone. If such a thing were to happen you would at once cry out trickery and fraud and begin to search for my accomplice and the hidden wires and springs. But suppose I were to say, "Bring me a book." And some one were to bring me a book, then in that case I have done nothing but express the thought, but the thought by itself did not bring the book, neither does the prayer however great it is ever magically do any thing. In the case of opening the door an intelligent spirit heard me express the desire and to please me used physical force as the power with which to open the door.

Here we have some of the elements of the explanation of prayer, and is the scriptural account from Genesis to Revelation. The explanation is found in the following considerations. This world in which we live is a trinitarian world from center to circumference. The universe as a whole and in all its parts is at one and the same time spirit, mind, and matter, so that the one does not exist without the other.

Let us apply this to ourselves, the incarnation of God and the powers of the universe. We are first

and above all else spirits — thinker mind, and thought — acting through our bodies composed of matter. Through our minds we think out mental results and through our bodies we work out physical results. The mind in itself no more moves a particle of matter than the body in itself produces a thought. The law which has never been violated is that we produce mental results with the mind and physical results through the material means of our own bodies or by controlling the material forces in the universe around us. Who has reached the limits of the control of mind over matter in our own bodies or in that of the universe around us? In Jesus, the ideal man, we see no limit to his control over matter both in his own body and in the universe around him. Nor does he claim that this power is limited to him, but is to be given to his disciples. His words are, "Verily I say unto you the works that I do the same shall ye do and greater because I go to the Father." Prayer is one of the means through which we get this power!

Prayer not only works out subjective results in the soul but through prayer the soul goes out into the objective world of man and nature and works

tremendous results there. Let us for a moment turn to the Scriptures to see how prayer produces these objective physical results.

When the Lord fed Elijah with food by the brook Cherith did it come dropping down from heaven? No: the ravens brought it. Material means were used to bring about material results. It is always so. When we pray for money does it come down to the earth manufactured in heaven? No: through the telepathic power of prayer some human person is moved to give us the money. The rationale of prayer, as tested by our experience and that of the writers of the Bible, is that it is the means, power, and force through which we call to our aid in times of distress spirits both seen and unseen, in the flesh and out of the flesh, human and angelic.

Prayer involves the power of communicating our thought and desires to other spirits in the universe, possibly by means of telepathic force. Secondly it presupposes that there are other spirits which can be reached through the exertion of this telepathic force, and that they are good enough to come to the aid and assistance of other spirits in time of need and

distress, if for our best interest: that there are on earth and in heaven ministering spirits. Does the Scripture teach that there are ministering spirits anxious and ready to help us if our requests are not contrary to the divine laws of God? Does not our Saviour say, "I can pray the Father and he will send me legions of angels."

Our desires, our prayers, are through this telepathic power communicated to other spirits. Through them the prayer is answered, and the results we ask for are wrought out. So prayer takes its place as the most reasonable thing and at the same time places in our hands the most tremendous force in the universe.

Is it reasonable for me to say, will some one open the door? This is a prayer asking that a physical thing be done. Some one who is willing to grant this request hears this prayer and with physical force works out a physical result. There is nothing unreasonable about this. Again I say, will some one tell me the length of the circumference of the earth? Some one answers, 25,000 miles. This is an answered prayer. But this prayer called for mental results and mental means were used to ac-

comply with it. Prayer is the soul's sincere desire whether physical, mental, or spiritual.

Starting then with this axiom that desire is prayer, let us see how it is the mightiest power in the universe, and first its subjective power in our own souls. It is the soul's sincere desire to make a fortune, get an education, win the love of your beloved, make a discovery, make an invention, or become a great musician, or lawyer, or doctor, or soldier. These desires like the great seething fires in the furnace of some mighty engine is the force that keeps alive the world's tumultuous and manifold activities. Let the fire die down in the furnace of the engine and the whole machinery stops. So let the soul's sincere desires die and the world's life would become one stagnant corpse.

All this is on the lower plane of our lives but when we come to the higher realm of our spiritual nature the same law holds true. I have a hateful disposition, am mean and selfish, but the desire comes — I do not know how — to be rid of these qualities. This desire, this prayer, is the means which I use to rid myself of these qualities. I am a sinful man but I sincerely desire to be Christlike. This desire

to be Christlike, the prayer to be Christlike, is the means by which I become Christlike. Destroy this desire in my heart and I can never become Christlike.

Lastly in its supreme and highest sense the soul's sincere desire takes this form: Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as in heaven. When this supremely holy desire and prayer takes up its permanent abode and habitation in the souls of all men the kingdoms of the world will become the kingdom of God.

But so far prayer, the soul's sincere desire, is subjective, it is making my body the temple of the Holy Spirit, it is making my heart and mind the heart and mind of the living God, it is making my personality one of the instruments through which God works in the world, it is making the power of God my power. It has not yet gone out into the world seeking the aid and cooperation, the good and welfare of other free self acting spirits, joining and linking them together, forming one mighty empire of souls seeking to do God's will in the world by becoming ministering spirits to all those in need of help.

For just a moment then let us see how prayer, the soul's sincere desire, works its objective will and decides the destiny of the world. I cannot do this better than by calling your attention to the great struggle which took place in the far east some few years ago between Russia and Japan. What marshalled those opposing armies, and bound them together with links stronger than brass and steel? No material force whatever but the mightiest force in the world, prayer, the soul's sincere desire. Whence did this originate and how did it work? It originated in the minds of the ruling classes in Japan and in Russia. This they were able to inspire in the minds and hearts of the rank and file of their nations until the leaven cast into the measure leavened the whole lump, made millions of hearts beat with a single thought, millions of souls will the same will, and millions of bodies fight side by side.

So this telepathic power of prayer always acts, the mightiest force in the universe. The soul's sincere desire is always contagious, spreads secretly and silently, and like the wind cometh and goeth whence it listeth up and down the world, seeks until it finds

the spirits that are like minded, and then binds them together into the mighty army of God. In this way the supreme prayer of our Lord and master Jesus Christ — thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as in heaven — is wrought out in the earth.

“Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear;
The upward glancing of an eye
When none but God is near.

Prayer is the Christian’s vital breath,
The Christian’s native air;
The watchword at the gates of death —
He enters heaven with prayer.”

PRAYER THE CREATOR OF
SPIRITUALITY

V

PRAYER THE CREATOR OF SPIRITUALITY

Suppose you were a philanthropist, and the goodness of your heart took the form of feeding, clothing, and educating helpless orphan children, how would you go about this most Christian and charitable work? Would you use prayer as your most valuable asset and strongest power in providing food, clothing, and education for these children?

If you were well known, had a magnetic personality which draws many friends about you, had eloquent speech with which to persuade others of the righteousness and justice of your cause, you would call a meeting of your friends before whom you would spread your plans and ask their help. In addition to this you would flood the Post Office with letters asking help, and also keep your plan constantly before the minds of the people through

the columns of the daily press. In doing this you would act wisely by using ordinary material channels to draw the kindly disposed and charitable people to help you in your laudable undertaking.

But suppose you were poor and friendless and unknown; did not have this means of reaching people and in this way securing their cooperation, and still were determined to do this philanthropic work, do you think it could possibly be done? Would it be reasonable to use prayer as a means of reaching people and getting them to help you? Has such an attempt as this ever been successfully done through prayer?

George Müller was one of God's philanthropists who gathered together the unfed, unclothed, and outcast orphans. But George Müller was unknown, poor and friendless. The world was not as charitable as it is now when it is very much easier to get money for such purposes. George Müller was not a good beggar of the ordinary type. He was hedged about and shut up to the only power he had, but he had this power in magnificent abundance and he unreservedly used it with unquestioned and absolute faith. He believed that if he asked it would

be given unto him, that the prayer of the righteous man availeth much. There was no doubt in his mind of this.

So he prayed for food for the children who had no resource except his bounty, and money always came sufficient for the immediate needs. During his life he cared for thousands of children and expended thousands and thousands of dollars. The International Encyclopædia says of him: "In December, 1835, after a visit to the continent, he published a proposal for the establishment of an orphan house for children bereft of both parents. Spontaneous offers of money and service were received, and the opening was announced May 18, 1836."

Let me call your attention to the expression — "spontaneous offers of money." Nobody to-day believes that there is a spontaneous any thing. Nothing is spontaneous, if you mean by this an effect without a cause. When something occurs, and we are ignorant of what caused it, we say that it is spontaneous. Spontaneous is simply a word to cover our ignorance of the cause of a thing without denying that the thing has a cause. Here,

however, the word spontaneous means that solicitations for money were not made through ordinary channels.

But has no solicitation for money been made? Solicitation for money has been made through the most powerful and effective means known to man. George Müller has been using the power of prayer. So when the orphanage is announced money comes spontaneously, but in reality not spontaneously but in answer to prayer. "At the end of 1856 there were 297 children under his care. They were multiplied until in 1875, 2000 children were lodged, fed, and educated without a shilling of endowment, without a committee, without an organization, and by funds drawn from all parts of the world." The prayers of George Müller were the endowment, the committee, and the organization that drew the money from all parts of the world.

In addition to accomplishing these material results, prayer accomplishes far higher results. In my own mind there is not the slightest doubt that prayer is the creator of all the goodness and spirituality in the world. This is certainly high claims for prayer. Well, a thing which has such high ori-

gin admits of high claims; for prayer comes from God, as we say in the collect for the twelfth Sunday after Trinity: "O Lord, we to whom thou hast given a hearty desire to pray." Of course not only prayer but in the deepest sense all things come from God; for there is no energy and life in the universe that does not come from God, and is not of God, and that God does not use in carrying out his good will in the world. Since prayer comes from God, and he inspires our souls to pray, he through prayer creates goodness in us and in others. This is God's way of creating spirituality in the world.

Take this beautiful, most beautiful, petition which contains the very essence and quintessence of prayer. "O God, make clean our hearts within us." When we in reality and in truth not only say but pray this prayer, we feel an inflow of spiritual life in our souls which lifts us heavenward upon angel wings.

You know where this prayer is first found. It is taken from the 51st Psalm, and is the utterance of David's soul when he was in the depths of despair on account of his grievous sins. Not only was

this prayer the power through which goodness and spirituality were created in David's heart but is the power through which goodness and spirituality are created in every human heart. No other power can do it. Until we pray, give me a clean heart, O God, we remain foul!

Not only does prayer create goodness and spirituality in our own hearts but by means of prayer we create the same spirituality in other hearts. Take this prayer out of Christianity's perfect and sublime Litany: "That it may please thee to strengthen such as do stand; and to comfort and help the weak-hearted; and to raise up those who fall; and finally to beat down Satan under our feet." This is not only a perfect and fitting prayer for ourselves but for all others. Oh! if we could but know how many millions of spirits in all parts of the universe the power of this prayer has made strong for righteousness in the face of the fiercest temptations, how many sorely tried hearts it has comforted and helped in times of despair, how many fallen it has saved, and how many it has enabled to beat down Satan under their feet, we would be oftener upon our knees using the energy and power of

prayer which not only creates in our own hearts but in the hearts of others the kingdom of God.

Prayer not only creates spirituality in our own souls but in the souls of others whether they are in the earshot of our prayers or on the other side of the world. Not long ago I read a story in the *Youth's Companion* about a family which was traveling in Europe. It was their custom while at home to have daily family prayer. But the children urged their father to give it up while they were traveling. The father held to his custom. Sometime after they returned to their home in America, the father met a woman who said to him: "I have often wanted to tell you how much good your prayers did me while I was in Paris." "But," said he, "I never saw you before. I did not even know that you were in Paris while I was there." She said, "Your room in the hotel in Paris adjoined mine, and I was in the mental anguish of a fierce temptation. I heard your daily family prayer in which you prayed that God would send the grace of His Holy Spirit to strengthen all those in temptation so that they would have the power to beat down Satan under their feet. I want to tell you that your

prayers gave me the strength to overcome my fierce temptation, and again I wish to thank you."

You readily see how prayer is effective when it is under the sound of your voice, but when we get beyond the ability of the human voice to make itself audible does prayer then lose its power and become null and void? Has the burning sands of the desert and the dashing waves of the ocean the power to bar the wings of prayer? Are not the prayers we have uttered this morning effective anywhere in the universe?

You have a child or a friend on the broad Pacific Ocean thousands of miles away. You know that he is going into the midst of great temptation and that he is wild and impulsive. Yielding to the hearty desire and overmastering impulse God has implanted in your heart to pray, you get down on your knees and pray perhaps as you never prayed before that your child may be preserved from temptation, that God will give him a new and contrite heart, and regenerate his soul by the power of His Holy Spirit.

Months or perhaps years pass before he returns home. You look into his face and see that a trans-

formation has come over him. He says: "Mother, let me tell you a wonderful experience I had while crossing the Pacific. One day, I do not know why or wherefore, I suddenly became ashamed of my past life, and asked God to give me his help to live a Christian life. The hour and the day when this happened is so burned into my soul that I shall never forget it." You find that it occurred at the time you were praying for him, and that your prayer is just as effective across thousands of miles of space as ten yards from you.

There are thousands of things happening like this all the time, so that every doubt is removed, and it is demonstrated that prayer is answered regardless of space. What the prayer of that mother did and the prayers of Christians are doing every day is to create spirituality in the hearts of mankind. Let us appreciate what we are doing when we are praying. We ordinarily have no conception of it. When we are praying we are sending forth a power that reaches and influences for good every individual spirit in this and in all worlds. For our prayers to be effective they must be able to reach and influence the individuals we are praying for across

the stellar spaces as easily as I can you who are sitting before me. If I did not believe this I for one would stop praying for any one beyond the sound of my voice.

Here comes the chief difficulty of the modern mind about prayer. It does not believe that one mind can influence another mind beyond the sound of the voice unless it sends a messenger, writes a letter, or sends a telegram. That prayer influences another across thousands of miles of space is an outgrown superstition.

If this is true how do you account for such facts as these? There is such a thing as hypnotism. There are some subjects who are so sensitive to this power that even when the hypnotizer and his subject are miles apart the hypnotizer can bring the subject to him simply by willing him to come. The person does not hear an audible voice calling him to come, but he feels impressed that he must come, and he does come at the time he is willed to come. Such well attested facts as these demonstrate that one mind does influence another mind across miles of space.

Once a clergyman told me that during the civil

war his family had a remarkable experience. Suddenly his mother burst out crying and said: "Your father is dead. He has been shot in battle to-day. I know it! I know it! I shall never see him again!" Soon the news of the battle came and with it the announcement of the death of our father.

Similar things are happening all the time, as well attested as the fact that Washington crossed the Delaware. They demonstrate to my mind that, apart from the ordinary channels of communication, one mind can communicate with another mind across any conceivable space, and demonstrates the reasonableness of that universal instinct God has implanted in our hearts to pray. There is not a single known fact that militates against the reasonableness of prayer.

In conclusion let me give you the explanation of prayer that is satisfactory to me. I shall do so by an illustration. Across the continent from New York to San Francisco there stretches a wire over which electricity flashes. When a message is flashed over that wire every office in connection with that wire receives the message. The condition of hearing is to be in connection with that central wire.

From any office you can send a message and it will be repeated in every office in connection with that central wire. In like manner the whole universe is one stupendous telepathic system in which there is but one universal mind and that universal mind is God in whom is all knowledge, wisdom, and power; that universal mind is in you and in me and in every individual in the universe; and through communion with that universal mind I am in communication with every individual spirit in the universe, just as every individual office in connection with the central wire is in communion with every office on the line. By prayer I am in communion through God, the universal mind, with all minds.

When George Müller wished money to run his orphanage in London, through the power of prayer he sent his telepathic message to every spirit in the world. Many men felt the charitable impulse created by the energy of Müller's prayer. They did not know why this charitable impulse came over them to contribute to George Müller's orphanage. But in response to this charitable impulse generated by the energy of Müller's prayers checks from all over the world came to London, and the newspapers

said that it came spontaneously. When holy impulses, ideas, and thoughts come into our minds, we do not know how, and often against our wills, they do not come spontaneously.

THE TRINITY OF PRAYER

VI

THE TRINITY OF PRAYER

The supreme reason for praying and fainting not is the character of God revealed through Jesus Christ. See how perfectly this reason is given in the collect for the twelfth Sunday after Trinity: "Almighty and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve; pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy; forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid; and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thy son our Lord." I ask you where you will find in any language a more perfect and sublime picture of the character of God than is contained in this prayer? Pray do not let it pass unnoted without trying to understand what it means.

For instance, if God were cruel, forgetful, unjust,

or indifferent, it would be worse than folly to pray to such a God. To pray to such a God would be to pray to the devil. Such a God would have to be reminded of our needs, begged, wheedled, coaxed, and propitiated in order to induce him to change his will, and look upon us with the eyes of mercy. The words of the prayer which I have just quoted teach us that God never forgets us, is always more ready to hear than we to pray, and the reason why we are not more abundantly blessed is not because God is not listening but because we do not ask the blessings he is ready, willing, and anxious to give us.

But you may ask me, if this is so why does not God give us all things we need whether we ask him or not? I answer this question by saying: because we are more than brutes. Did you ever think about it in this way? To the extent that we are animals, and for the ministering to our animal needs, God sends his rain upon the just and the unjust alike. For all animals the sun shines, the rain falls, and the seeds sprout and germinate. The earth and the fullness thereof is the common property of all animals without their desiring or asking it. It is a free gift. This applies to all animals.

But because we are more than animals, because we have a mental and a spiritual nature as well as a material nature, if this higher part of us is to live and grow and not die, then the only possible condition upon which it can be so done is by perpetual prayer on our part. There are a good many things in this world which we get whether we desire or deserve them. In the beginning we get them all in this way or we should never get them at all. We did not ask to be born, whether we would have a body, mind, or spirit. We did not desire them or deserve them for we had done nothing either to desire or deserve them. In the beginning all that we are we owe as a debt of gratitude to God, man, and nature.

But the remarkable thing about us after we have come to self-consciousness is that if we continue to keep body, mind, and spirit, we must both desire and deserve to keep them. That which is given us as a free gift to start with we must both desire and deserve to keep, otherwise it will ultimately be taken from us. (1) For a while whether we desire or deserve it we are kept alive by the powers of God, man, and nature. (2) For a while we are permitted to desecrate by gluttony, avarice, and pride our

bodies, minds, and spirits. (3) The kind of body, mind, and spirit we have depends in the long run upon how we live and act. (4) Finally judgment is passed upon us, the essence of which is that we are permitted to keep only what we deserve to keep. Call to your minds the barren fig tree. Give it every chance to bear fruit; but if it never will bear fruit cut it down and cast it into the fire. Only the tree which bears fruit deserves a place in mother earth.

What has prayer to do with all this you may ask? I answer by asking, What is prayer? That prayer is the soul's sincere desire is the definition we have been using all along. To find out then what part prayer plays in our growth and development is to find out what part desire plays in making us what we are.

The first thing to note is that against our wills, against our desires, the most precious part of us which we call mind and spirit goes forever halt, maimed, and blind. In other words, until we desire a thing, which is the same thing as praying for it, God cannot give us the highest and best things of life. For instance, can any power make me a musician against my will, a lawyer, a doctor, a mathe-

matician, or a scholar? Was any one against his will ever made a good man? Was any one ever made patient under insult, forgiving when wronged, or to maintain the purity of his soul in the midst of the fierce temptations of youth apart from the agonizing desires and prayers of the soul? So when you ask me why God does not give us the most precious things of life without our asking him for them, I reply: God cannot give you these things without your desiring them, and to sincerely desire a thing is to pray for it. Our desires are our prayers.

But you may say: This is reasonable so far, but why does not God give what I pray for as soon as I ask it? And again I reply that in the nature of things this is an impossibility for apart from work our desires go ungratified. You may pray even earnestly and without ceasing to be a great lawyer or a great merchant but until you work just as hard as you pray your prayers go unanswered, and rightly so, because work is as necessary as prayer. If all we had to do was to desire the sugar plums, and they were to come falling into our mouths, we would remain babies to the end of time. If our Lord

had remained upon his knees all the time praying upon the mountain tops, and never gone down in the valleys and worked until he found his end upon the cross, all his praying would have amounted to nothing.

Also we desire, that is, pray for a great many foolish things which if granted immediately would be our undoing. Then we pray for a great many things which are good in themselves but if granted at the time we ask them would be to our grievous hurt and injury, but if delayed until we have been tested by the fires of temptation and tempered by years of experience, until our mental and spiritual nerves have become strong enough to use the gift we are asking for, not as a ministrant to our own pride and selfish ambition but for the wise and unselfish good of others, only then would it be wise to grant many of our prayers.

One of the most notable instances of long delayed but finally answered prayer came to my notice the other day. The writer said:

“When we speak of ‘the law’s delays’ we usually mean that a poor man may have to wait a long time before his case is heard, a longer time before it is de-

cided, and still a longer time before he gets his money. But in this particular case we are speaking of the delays that held back an English lawyer from the success he finally was.

“Admitted to the bar in 1746, he, during fourteen years, had only two cases, both so trifling that the report books do not mention them. He kept on with his legal studies, he was treasurer of a college in Oxford, held sundry minor offices, lectured and made himself a modest reputation. As a task for leisure hours he became a good practical printer, and these various occupations kept him from despair, but who is the baffled man who can defy chagrin?

“In 1758 this lawyer, who had grown sick of sessions after sessions, all equally barren for him, was elected to a new law professorship. Five days after his election he delivered his introductory lecture, and that lecture is as interesting to the young physician, the young clergyman, the young author, or scientist as to the young lawyer. No man who ever lived, not Solomon himself, could have prepared such a lecture in five days. It shows a knowledge and ripeness, a long sustained industry and patience, a rich style and a logical method worthy of Sir William

Blackstone, and Blackstone was the man who delivered it."

You may perhaps desire to be a great poet, lawyer, doctor, merchant, or manufacturer. Our heavenly Father says: "I am glad my child that you are praying for these great and honorable things, but what are you going to do with these gifts after you get them? Why do you wish to be a great poet, lawyer, doctor, merchant, or manufacturer?"

Ninety-nine out of every hundred people who pray such prayers have no idea of the responsibility and high ideal of integrity and unselfishness which are demanded and laid upon one who would be not only a great but a good poet, lawyer, merchant, doctor, or manufacturer. If we wish to be a great anything without at the same time being unselfish we and the world would be cursed. So in proportion as we ask great things of God so proportionately great must be our unremitting and tireless goodness and work.

What results justify this wisdom of the infinite in delaying his answers to many of our prayers? Its justification is that the long and toilsome and lonely years of work and privation and lack of appreciation

burn up the unholy ambitions of our nature, so that at last when the great gifts and powers we have been praying for come to maturity in us, we become a blessing to mankind and not a curse.

I cannot pass over this part of my subject, however, without calling your attention to the dark side of prayer which may be somewhat startling. We have seen that desire is prayer, and that if our prayers are answered they must be backed up by work as great as the prayers are great. This is the law registered in human experience and written in Scripture. It does not make any difference whether this prayer is for a good purpose or not, if it is persistently worked for, God will answer it within certain limits. For instance, two men equally desire great wealth and both obtain it. The prayers of both have been answered. One used his wealth to assuage pain and uplift mankind, another to defraud, cheat, and oppress mankind. What shall we say to this? The first thing to be said is something we very rarely think about, that we are held responsible for the kind of prayers we pray. To pray a great prayer is to invoke upon ourselves a great responsibility! The only safe and sane way to pray is

as Jesus taught us to pray. Begin our prayers with "hallowed be thy name," in the middle say "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," and end them with "for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory." Why is this method the only safe and sane way to pray?

For several reasons but chiefly because the laws through which prayers are answered, being the impartial laws of the universe, act without respect of persons. With fire you can cook your neighbor's food or burn down his house. I know that we are accustomed to call only our good aspirations and desires which consciously go out to God prayers, but we must also learn that our evil aspirations and desires are prayers which God answers, within certain limits, if we persist in them long enough. Our prayers, our desires, are our salvation or damnation!

But perhaps the final and complete explanation of why God grants evil prayers is that we can be cured of our ignorant and sinful nature only by letting us experience the consequences, as the burnt child dreads the fire.

In conclusion, let me call your attention to the

threefoldness of the act of prayer, for prayer, like every thing else, is trinity in unity, corresponding to the threefoldness of God, man, and nature. Call to mind these words of our great teacher: "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you." These words describe the fullness of prayer in all its height, length, and breadth. "Knocking" is a bodily thing. Prayer involves physical exercise. Do we pray to God to give us physical things? Then physical means must be used to get them.

"Seeking" is a mental thing. It is something which involves thought. When we pray God to give us mental things this prayer is answered through the mental efforts we make or some one else makes for us.

"Asking" lays stress upon our spiritual aspirations which have neither been thought out with the mind nor wrought out through the body. It is the soul's sincere desire expressed or unexpressed, a sigh, a tear, the spiritual aspirations of the soul upon which the destiny of the world hangs!

Men in their earliest ideas about prayer thought that the soul's sincere desire was enough, that all

they must do was to express the desires, and whatever they desired would come dropping down from heaven. But our Saviour said that this is not enough. It is true that if ye ask ye shall receive, but upon conditions; it is not enough to have the soul's sincere desires, high and exalted spiritual aspirations and ideals alone; for our aspirations and ideals find a local habitation and a name only by seeking long with the mind and knocking often and hard with the hand. Every prayer we have involves this threefold process in its fulfilment.

For instance, suppose your town were visited with the plague of typhoid fever. How would you go about praying to the Lord to remove it? Simply by falling down upon your knees and asking God to remove it? Surely this is not the way our Saviour taught us how to pray. If I follow his directions — ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you — I would first ask God to put the desire into the hearts of the people to have this sickness removed; then seek out with the mind the cause of this sickness; and then after the cause was found remove it with physical means. So we would ask and receive, seek and find,

and knock and it would be opened unto us. So every prayer from the removal of sickness to the coming of the kingdom of God is answered in this threefold way.

To perfectly love God we must love him with our hearts, minds, souls, and bodies; so the earnest prayer of the righteous man must be a thing of spirit, mind, and body before it availeth much. Every thing that our spirits can ask, our minds can seek, and our physical nature strives to get, is ready and waiting for us before we are born. Do we desire physical things? The whole material universe of sea and land and sky, of waving forest, growing grain, and choicest fruit is God's answer to this prayer, but to get it we must knock. Do we pray for mental enlightenment? Schools, libraries, philosophers, poets, scientists, teachers world without end, is the answer to this prayer; men who have been seeking since creation's dawn began, and always will be seeking and finding, is the answer to this prayer for our mental enlightenment. And when on account of sin our consciences do make cowards of us all, and the cry is wrung from our souls, give me a clean heart, O God, and renew a

right spirit within me, the answer to this prayer is that God makes our bodies the temple of the Holy Spirit, and gives us those good things which we are not worthy to ask but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord.

THY WILL BE DONE

VII

THY WILL BE DONE

The purpose of prayer is not to change the will of God but change our wills and through our changed wills get the will of God done on earth as it is in heaven. The soul's sincere desire is first to know what the will of God is, and when this becomes the sincere prayer of any soul, not my will but thine be done, we are not left in doubt for one moment what the will of God is; for to know Jesus is to know the way, truth, purpose, and will of God from the foundation of the world.

It is the will of God that we be fed, clothed, and housed, not a few of us but all of us. To the extent that any one unnecessarily goes hungry, naked, ignorant, and cold the will of God is not done. It is not the will of any Christian that any man, woman, or child be in this condition. To the extent that we will this we will the will of God.

But how is this will which is my will and your will

and the will of God to be done on the earth? I answer that it is done on earth as it is done in heaven. The will of God is done in heaven because there is not an idle or lazy person there. They work and love work in heaven and could not be there without doing so.

How then does the earnest man effectually pray for his daily bread? He earnestly prays by earnestly going to work. I have no bread and God has plenty. It is his will that I shall have bread if I ask him. I ask him by plowing the soil, planting the seed, and killing the weeds. This is the prayer of man that God answers abundantly. God always answers our prayers if we ask him in the right way.

Not only the method of asking but the order of asking is equally important. There is the profoundest truth in the order that Jesus taught us to ask for our needs, the one he placed first and the one he placed last. He taught us to pray first, "hallowed be thy name." As a result of this his kingdom comes on earth as in heaven. His kingdom first comes in our hearts and when the kingdom of God gets in our hearts we cannot help praying, give us this day our daily bread.

He did not say after this manner pray ye: "O Lord God Almighty, give me my daily bread, not only enough for this day's need and necessity but enough this minute for the balance of my life and of the best and finest quality, enough, O Lord, for me and my wife, my son John and his wife, us four and no more, O Lord God almighty. Just give us a handsome house, the latest improved auto, a million dollar bank account, and the rest of the world can go to the devil. But we will serve thee occasionally by giving some of our spare change, occasionally go to church when it is not too hot or too cold, and be generous sometimes when it is easier to be generous than to be selfish.

"Yes, O Lord, after we have served the world, the flesh, and the devil, and cannot serve them any longer, we will give ourselves to thee, O God. We could not possibly give thee our health, our youth, and strength; but after we have grown old and decrepid, and are racked with rheumatism and gout, and nobody else will have us and we are not fit for any thing else, then we will come to thee with our rags and filth and rottenness, and we will give all these to thee, O Lord God almighty."

The promises of God run on this wise: "Those who seek me early shall find me. I bless those who ask unselfishly, for others first and themselves last. And I give most abundantly of bread and knowledge to them who first and above all things seek the kingdom of righteousness. So after this manner pray ye: our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as in heaven."

What does our Father who art in heaven mean? It is first of all a recognition that every thing we have or can get comes from God, as the Psalmist says: "All things come from thee, O God, and of thine own have we given thee." As St. Paul says, "In God we live and move and have our being." Only in this attitude of mind and spirit is true safety and salvation found. When we depart from this and say: By my might and wealth and power I will get all these things; I am sufficient for myself; then are we nigh unto destruction, for those whom the gods would destroy first make themselves blind and stupid and selfish.

Second, calling God Father tells who God is, that he is kin to us, that we are his children, that

we are in his image and after his likeness, that we are created and born so ; first physically, second mentally, and third spiritually. By saying “ who art in heaven ” we do not mean any special location or place, for he who is omnipresent cannot be confined or limited to any one location or place. The kingdom of heaven is first of all biological and not geographical. It is the kingdom of righteousness. When Our Saviour describes God as in the astronomical heavens and also on the earth and in us, he is not locating God in any one spot in the universe which would be to isolate and limit him to that part of the universe, and by so doing make him finite. The kingdom of heaven is the ideal and perfect kingdom of life which is first of all sinless ; second, the kingdom of life in which the fullness of knowledge dwells excluding ignorance ; and third, a kingdom of life in which power dwells excluding weakness.

Only to such a God can we pray with the confidence of conviction that our prayers will be answered. We therefore pray to him who dwells in heaven, that is in sinlessness, knowledge, and power ; who can be touched with our infirmities, who is like unto us in all points, sin excepted ; God our Father

almighty who is ready, willing, and anxious to make us partakers of his life, wisdom, and power, if we will ask him aright.

The first way to ask him aright is unselfishly. For this reason our Saviour taught us to say not *my* but *our* Father. He did not teach us to say give me *my* daily bread but give us *our* daily bread. Do we pray for knowledge, wealth, or power for ourselves? Then we must also pray that others may have these things as well as ourselves.

If we desire these things strong enough and work for them hard enough they may be given us, even if we do selfishly desire them, and lavishly use them only upon me and my wife, my son John and his wife, us four and no more; but under these conditions they become a curse and not a blessing, and soon depart from us. In the language of the Psalmist, such prayers flourish like the green bay tree. I sought his place but it could nowhere be found.

It is only the prayers of the righteous man that avail much and long. The man who prays selfishly may get his prayers answered for a while, and he may use the knowledge and power God has given him to cheat, defraud, and corrupt mankind for a

while; but sooner or later he wakes up and finds God and man and nature against him, and unless he repents in dust and sackcloth and ashes the righteous power of God, man, and nature will crush and destroy him. God is willing to answer our prayers for bread and all things else needful for us, but God wishes what he gives us to be a blessing and not a curse. In order for his gifts to be a blessing and not a curse we must become unselfish, we must learn to seek the good of others, we must learn to seek the will of God and not our personal, petty, and private good.

Christ went to the heart of this matter when he said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added to you." When the sincere desire of the people of the United States is, "thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as in heaven," then we can banish poverty, ignorance, and sin. We are not doing this because we are first seeking the loaves and fishes, and we are not careful how we get them so we get them. We lie, cheat, steal, and break our necks in the world's great fight for victuals.

Not until the spirit which says, "thy kingdom

come, thy will be done on earth, as in heaven," becomes our sincere desire will every one get his bread. Until we all pray this prayer the strong will surfeit and the weak will starve.

Here is the cause of hunger and nakedness in the midst of the boundless wealth of nature and our superb and matchless machinery. Were this planet as big as Jupiter and our machinery a thousandfold more perfect than it is the hunger and nakedness of the world could not be lessened in the least — no not as long as we have only such men and women as the majority of us now are. Under these conditions, with a larger world and more perfect machinery, we would have multiplied manyfold the opportunities for men and women to make colossal brutes of themselves.

It is something worth knowing and remembering that no race ever perished for lack of food. Races perish for no other reason than moral failure. Races perish with all physical resources in their favor. Races perish because they are not fit to live.

For man to have bread he must seek something higher than bread. He must first go to the high altar of truth, honesty, and holiness, and swear to

live by these though the high heavens fall. When this becomes the sincere desire of our souls we shall get bread and all else that we need world without end, for then we shall be in league with all the physical, mental, and spiritual powers of God, man, and nature, and all our problems will be solved.

ON EARTH AS IN HEAVEN

VIII

ON EARTH AS IN HEAVEN

In our last chapter we took as our subject, “thy will be done.” Let us now ask ourselves, did our Lord in that one universal and complete prayer, and perfect model of all prayer, called the Lord’s Prayer, confine himself to our Souls’ sincere desires? When we examine this prayer with this end in view we shall find that he did.

It is plain and selfevident that we have spiritual, mental, and physical natures, no more and no less, so that every thing we can possibly desire must come under one of the three heads — bread, knowledge, or righteousness. In the comprehensiveness of its meaning the Lord’s Prayer is the sincere desire of every soul when it comes to selfconsciousness and recognises whence cometh our help. For every desire is a prayer and every gratified desire is an answered prayer.

Bread, knowledge, and righteousness cover all our possible desires. The term bread covers the needs of the body — food, clothing, houses, etc.,— knowledge covers all our mental knowing self needs, including all the arts, sciences, and philosophies; righteousness all that bread cannot give and knowledge cannot satisfy, the needs of our spiritual nature. Give me bread only and I become a fat, sleek, tigerish animal; knowledge only and I become a devil; but when in addition to the hunger for bread, and the desire for knowledge, a passion for righteousness is roused in my soul then I become the spiritual child of God. It is the coming to selfconsciousness of this spiritual ideal self in us which the world and all that it can give cannot satisfy. When this universal, most deeply implanted, and divine self in us comes to selfconsciousness in us, it subordinates all things of the appetite and all passions of the mind a willing captive to the chariot wheels of this glorious spiritual self in us.

It is true that we still need and desire bread, and by virtue of desiring it still continue praying for it; it is true that ignorance still presses its heavy hand of thick darkness over our eyes and we still pray for

more intellectual light to banish the mysteries from our pathway: but when the spiritual comes to self-consciousness in us we desire all these things with a difference. Then we subordinate, consecrate, and sanctify all powers of the body and mind to fulfilling the behests and demands of the spiritual ideal of our souls revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The spiritual ideal of the soul then becomes to us what the welfare of his country is to the patriot. When the patriot scents danger from afar, or dishonor to his beloved country's welfare, he dedicates all the faculties of his mind and all the powers of his body to the sacred cause of his country's preservation. When one seeks his own ease in her hour of peril he sniffs a breeze tainted with treason, and in every attempt to put the purely private and selfishly personal above the common good of all he hears the bugle blast of a robber band.

In all of our souls there is a supreme desire for something to which every thing else is and must be subordinated if this prayer is to be answered. It may be the inventor for his invention, the musician for his music, the poet for his poetry, or the business man for the success of his enterprises. I care not

for what we pray, it is only when we desire with all the aspiration of our spirits, seek with all the faculties of our minds, and knock with all the power of our bodies, are our prayers answered. And to the extent that our prayers are worth our while to pray them and worth God's while to answer them, the higher must we aspire, the keener must we think, and the more persistently must we work. In no prayer is this more supremely true than when our soul's sincere desire is:

Our Father who art in heaven:
Hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On earth as in heaven.

When we pray this prayer, if we have any conception of what it means, well may we pray for patience and grit if we would have these words be more than an idle mockery upon our lips. Let us try to get the magnitude of it. Take the three petitions:

Hallowed be thy name on earth as in heaven,
Thy kingdom come on earth as in heaven,
Thy will be done on earth as in heaven.

What does this involve? The kingdom of heaven is a spiritual thing, mental thing, and physical thing.

If this kingdom were on earth as in heaven: (1) here on earth there would be no sin — lying, thieving, murders, suicides; (2) there would be no ignorance for it is the will of God that all shall be intelligent; (3) there would be no people shivering with cold, ragged, and starving, for it is not the will of God that we should suffer for these things as long as there is plenty of food, clothing, and coal. When we pray this prayer I take it for granted that we are consciously praying for one and all of these things. Until this is the supreme prayer of our souls this ideal kingdom of life called heaven will not be wrought out here on the earth however much God may will it.

Let me call your attention to how as much of the kingdom of heaven, which has already come upon the earth, has gotten here. First it did not come through one race. The race of Israel was superbly equipped to apprehend spiritual things, but with all the sincere desires of their souls they could not give more than the spiritual aspiration and ideal for the kingdom of heaven which has come upon the earth; for when he, the incarnation of their spiritual ideal, came they rejected him and continue to reject him as

a race until this present time. Save for the knowledge that God is one and not many, that he is utterly righteous and desires the same on the part of his children as the only worship that is acceptable to him, and the supreme gift of Jesus and the Apostles to the world, they have contributed nothing to bring the kingdom of God upon the earth. What our Jewish brethren did was of supreme worth and absolutely necessary to bring the kingdom of God upon the earth, but other things were necessary which they could not bring.

If we were to limit the kingdom of God to the organized Christian Church, which I am far from doing, how much of that do we owe to the Jewish race? The Greeks gave us the language of the New Testament and Christian theology. The Hebrew gave us the spiritual ideal, the Greek through his philosophic mind organized it into forms of thought so that we could understand it, the Roman gave us the physical organization of the kingdom.

Israel asked and received the spiritual ideal, the Greek sought long with his mind until he organized it into the mental kingdom, and the Roman knocked long and hard with his iron hand until he organized

it into a physical kingdom. So at last it came upon the earth as the institution we call the Church. The Hebrew, the Greek, the Roman, the one unconsciously to the other, were praying and were receiving the answers to their prayers — thy kingdom come on earth as in heaven.

And pray, let us ask, what part we here in America are playing in bringing in the kingdom of heaven upon the earth? Even the most sanguine admit that the kingdom of God is here upon the earth in its most fragmentary forms and in comparatively few lives. That the kingdom is in comparatively few lives indicates the necessary work we must do in order to bring the kingdom more fully upon the earth. This is found in that in which America at the present time leads the world — in the democratic ideal, industrial activity, and in the exploitation of machinery. These three things are vitally and necessarily connected with bringing the kingdom of God upon the earth.

First, how has the democratic ideal affected religion? By making us all kings and priests unto God, by discrediting the idea that God has special favorites, by demonstrating that one man in the sight

of God is of as much value as another, that every man has human and divine parentage so that we all have our Father in heaven as well as our father upon the earth.

But more especially still by its fundamental concept that government is not primarily some external thing sitting upon a throne but a spiritual ideal in every individual as well as an organism of patriotic citizens. Christianity says that the kingdom of heaven is within you, which, when translated into the language of the earth, takes the form of the democratic ideal, and says that the government is in you.

Growing out of the spiritual democratic ideal the industrial ideal of democracy necessarily grows: that every body must be educated, work, and support himself by his own labor because no one has the right to live upon the labors of another, because only in work is there selfrespect and selfdevelopment, and that every one be educated mentally, physically, and spiritually. For only where these conditions are fulfilled can a nation of the greatest industrial activity be produced. Behind the gun is the man.

But back of and beyond all this it is a literal fact

that through the exploitation of machinery has the kingdom of God come upon the earth. Surely it is unnecessary for me to point out that to take machinery from man would push him back into a brutal condition, and the heaven for which man has been praying by asking, seeking, and knocking, would be no more. Surely it is unnecessary for me to point this out in detail. Take away from us the printing press, steam engine, and railroad, to mention no more, and it would not take us long to go back to the condition of mediæval Europe. These are the lines upon which humanity is working to bring the kingdom of God upon the earth.

When it is our soul's sincere desire, with all the passionate longings of our whole being, to give all people in the world the opportunity of being equal whether they are born so or not, to fit them for the duties and responsibilities of the ballot, to make every person industrially stand in his own shoes; and in order to do this spend millions upon millions of dollars on public schools, knock at every machine shop until some machine is invented which will do the work of hundreds of hands, and patiently seek in every laboratory until some serum is found

that will destroy one more disease of man, in doing all these things are we not praying for the coming of the kingdom of God upon the earth? Whether we are doing this consciously or not we are bringing the kingdom of God upon the earth.

Ah, do you not see how deep, broad, comprehensive, universal, and instinctive a thing prayer is? That these instinctive desires, of which our uttered prayers are but weak and formal expression, are created in us by God and his objective forces and powers of the universe. God first creates for us in his universe all that we can possibly desire or wish. He puts in our hearts the hearty desire for these things. We do not create these desires in ourselves. There is something in God's universe that answers to and satisfies these desires of our souls. For God to create a desire in our souls which it is impossible even for him to gratify is the quintessence of cruelty.

To my mind this is one of the unanswerable proofs of worlds beyond this world, and life infinitely transcending this life. We spend years of hard labor preparing ourselves for a business or a learned profession. At last we are prepared for our

life's work. An accident, a snake crossing our path, a mosquito bite — and all is over. No: all is not over. Every faculty we have educated is for eternity. If not exercised here it will be hereafter. In our Father's house are many mansions.

OUR TREASURES

Lay not up treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.—
Matt. 6: 19.

IX

OUR TREASURES

Treasures are those things which last, satisfy, and pass current in all worlds. That earthly things have not these qualities is a sufficient reason why we should not make treasures of them. They are not ordained as ends in themselves but as the means and scaffolding through which we reach the inmost recesses of life.

Because we have treasures it does not exclude our liking and valuing other things. Our treasures are those things upon which we place the emphasis of our liking, for which when the test comes we give up all else to save. This is what is meant by making a treasure of a thing, and what we ought not to make of any material thing. For change and decay are written upon the face of all earthly things, the inevitable prey of the moth, the rust, and the thief. What escapes the rust the moth destroys, and what the moth does not destroy the thief steals.

The brightest burnished steel exposed to the dews of a single night begins to rust. The rain and the mildew, the wind and the storm and the ivy, turn marble palaces to shapeless heaps of ruins. The costliest silks and furs are riddled in a few years by the moth and the mildew. In vain do we think that we can still keep these our treasures though we find means to prevent the rust, and put to flight the moth—for we cannot prevent the thief from stealing. For when the appointed hour of our time strikes, be it at the blazing noontide or at the midnight watch, a thief comes who steals from us every treasure that has escaped the moth and the rust, and consigns them to other hands no matter how diligently we have gathered them nor how tightly we may clasp them; and gives them to other hearts no matter how much we have loved them, and toiled, and fretted, and sinned to enjoy them for a few days.

Let us learn a parable from the birds who in the spring of the year build their nests. Day by day with busy zeal and equal regularity, their nests, under the wonderful skill of bird architecture, assume their beautiful and picturesque forms. How-

ever careful they may be in building their houses, with the skill and beauty given them of God, the nest is never their treasure. They look beyond the nest. The nest has significance and value to them only because it is the temporary dwelling place of their young, helpless, and beautiful birdlings. They are their treasures. What reck they though the summer's sunshine and the winter's storm and frost shall consign their once beautiful nest to shapeless ruins? The birdling has flown, and, under other skies, is singing sweetly its song as it builds another nest.

How symbolical of earth and earthly things is that bird's nest — temporary, fleeting, passing, and decaying! It has served its purpose, and is now crumbling into dust because of no further use after the birdling's wings bear him away. Let us learn the bird wisdom and use earthly things as they use their nests, not for the sake of the nest, but for the sake of something far higher, for our souls which some day will leave material things for the sake of something higher.

God never intended earthly things to be otherwise than temporary and fleeting because they serve only a temporary and fleeting purpose. They are like

the scaffolding of a house which serves the temporary purpose of aiding the carpenters while they are building the house, and as soon as the house is built the scaffolding is consigned to destruction. So the earth and earthly things are for us.

When we so use the earth and earthly things that they teach our souls to see the wisdom, love, and presence of God; teach us to be unselfish and self-sacrificing; when through them we learn patience in bearing material ills and losses; when through them we learn self-control, and hope and faith and love, then we have not made them treasures in themselves, but have so used them as to gain the great ends and aims of life which will endure when the earth shall have passed away, and God shall have rolled it up as a scroll.

We shall not have laid up treasures on the earth, but have so used earthly things as to transmute them into heavenly treasures. We shall have acted as the wise man, who, when he wishes to travel in far countries, exchanges houses and lands and merchandize for precious jewels and finest gold which pass current and buy goodly things in all lands. So should we use the earth and earthly things as the

means through which we make a soul loved of men, and honored in the presence of God and in the sight of his holy angels. This is the abiding and eternal treasure in which our souls find happiness and peace and joy.

PRAYER

“O God, who hast prepared for those who love thee such good things as pass man’s understanding; pour into our hearts such love towards thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

WHEN YE FAST

When ye fast be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you that they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face. That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.—Matt. 6: 16-18.

X

WHEN YE FAST

We find on the shining sands of the seashore millions of beautiful shells with chaste carving and exquisite coloring. The rainbow seems imprisoned in their ever changing hues and shades. But the life which once lived in them and made these beautiful shells has long since departed, and the waves have cast them upon the seashore to return once more dust to dust and ashes to ashes. So are cast aside to perish religious forms, customs, and doctrines out of which has departed the divine life which gives them their significance, acceptability to God, and their usefulness to men.

To such a pass had fasting come in the earthly days of our Lord. Its beautiful and divine spirit was absent. Its beneficence and helpfulness to the soul was desecrated, and like stagnant waters had become foul and corrupting. Fasting was, in their practice of it, a cheap method to attract the vulgar

gaze of the crowd, gain notoriety for great sanctity, and peculiarly religious and devout lives. With unkempt hair, disfigured faces, they presented emaciated forms to gain the praise of men. It is needless to say that these fasting Pharisees got their reward, but not the reward of God descending upon them in truer, gentler, and more genuine character; in the conscious possession of sins overcome, and in the halo of a higher spiritual life. They came through their period of fasting with emaciated forms and sins fattened seven times fatter. Fanatical pride was only the more strengthened by the formal observance of an act out of which its spirit and life had departed.

Jesus did not condemn fasting. He took it for granted that his followers would fast. He knew a man who followed him would have hunger flesh and blood cannot satisfy. Our Lord took from fasting the dangers to which it had been liable — religious pride, vulgar notoriety, and the merchandise that may be made out of it among men. He directed that fasting must be attended with no outward sign which will attract the attention of others, and it must be done in a cheerful and smiling way. Beyond

these Jesus did not give any set rules for fasting, prescribing this dress or that, this food or that food. But said, when ye fast do it in an unostentatious way, leaving the individual to do it in his individual way.

With a once prevalent method of fasting, inflicting pain upon ourselves by flagellation and starving the body by an insufficiency of food, no one has less sympathy with nor more abhorrence of than myself. We never advocate such fasting as this. Nor have we the slightest sympathy with such a reason for fasting; on the contrary we look upon it as one of those delusions which work deadly damage to the soul; for when the reaction comes, as it surely will, damage will be wrought. The man or the woman will plunge into greater excess than before.

That starvation of the body is the way to fatten the soul is not the reason for fasting. This is to make of fasting a mere bodily thing instead of a spiritual thing. When fasting is used in a spiritual way it takes its natural and normal place among the duties of a healthy and conscientious Christian, and he will do it with a glad heart and with a cheerful countenance.

In that ideal state, which we may have been taught existed in the Garden of Eden, there was no fasting; nor would there be need of fasting to-day if we did not go to excess and desecrate our souls by excess. As the world exists to-day we can not truly perform our duty to ourselves, to others, and to God without fasting. When the truth, thus clearly seen, in this way presents itself to our minds and hearts, we no longer fast because the Church and Bible say so, because it is expected of us, because it is customary and the fashion, because we feel somehow we ought to give up this or that thing.

When we see that fasting is a duty we owe to ourselves, in order to get the best development of our bodies and minds and spirits, it comes in a new and striking light, and is shorn of all its monkish misconceptions, and its blighting and degrading asceticism.

Here the children of this world, who in their day and generation are wiser than the children of light, can teach us a lesson. When prize-fighters have signed an agreement to enter a contest they are put on the simplest and most nutritious food. No one would accuse prize-fighters of being monkish, and

still they are made to fast in the most real way. They are placed under the most rigid discipline as to eating and bodily exercise. It must be done regularly — rain or shine, hot or cold. No appetite of the flesh during the period of training is to have sway or control. The flesh is under domination of the spirit. The prize-fighter fasts because he wishes to conquer in his contest, and he knows this is the only way to conquer.

It is the only way the Christian can conquer. To conquer the world he must first conquer himself. No fasting is a true fasting that is injurious to the body, on the contrary the body comes out of it all the better, and all the more perfect instrument of the Holy Spirit. Fasting is not denying the body any thing that is best for it. There is need of fasting only where there is excess. And who does not go to excess in one way or another? Fasting is the spirit saying to the body, I am your master; you are my servant; obey me.

Fasting is a beating back into their proper channels the excessive desires and passions of the body and the soul. At certain seasons of the year, when the plains are deluged and the torrents pour down

the mountain sides, the great Mississippi breaks its levees, spreads its turbid torrents far and wide, and brings dismay and terror and death to man and beast. At such a time a drouth is the greatest blessing that could happen. Then the stream would once more be confined to its channel and serve its legitimate purpose.

So if fasting is to have its legitimate place in our Christian thinking and living it must serve a similar purpose. It must be the spirit restraining the excess of our passions, beating them back into their legitimate channels and confining them there; whether it be eating or drinking, vanity or pride, ambition or avarice. This kind of fasting can be done only in secret as our spirits wrestle with flesh and blood, our daily lives alone proclaiming openly how the conflict has terminated. Thus we see the sweet reasonableness and stern necessity of fasting if we perform our duty to ourselves; for he who masters himself masters the world, unlocks her profoundest secrets, and captive holds her every power.

Have we perfect control of our tongues, our hands, our eyes, our ears, and our palates? Have we no excess that we should overcome? Then there

is no need for us to fast. We are perfect and have become as gods. Again our Christian duty to others will make us fast. For there are the poor, the sick, the crippled, and the unfortunate in the world. That beautiful dress or bonnet, perfectly harmless in itself, but will I buy it or a plainer one, is a question that must often come to us, when we think of the sick, the poor, the crippled, the halt, the maimed, and the blind. Will I give up this luxury that some one else may have a necessity of life, is a question that must often come to us. With these sights daily around us, and Christian love in our hearts, how can we do other than live plainer and simpler lives that we may have the ability and power to help others sorely in need of our help?

My duty to God will make me fast, will make me deny myself that his Church may have the money and the means to do its great work in the world. God's work shall not languish while I am self-indulgent and selfishly consuming all the gifts he has given me, and I give nothing in return. I will not be so utterly selfish. I will not show myself so utterly unworthy of his gifts and love.

This is the kind of fasting may God encourage

in us, a fasting that lays its hallowing and restraining hand upon the appetites of the flesh, the pride and ambition and vanities of the soul, purifying and elevating them. A fasting that will make us live simpler and plainer lives that we may have the power to heed the cry of the distressed — that they may not cry in vain. A fasting that will make us turn aside and say, “I must be about my Father’s business.” Such prayer and fasting are no dead forms nor lifeless shells but the soul filled with zeal, beneficence, and power. It does not appear unto men to fast, but the Father which seeth in secret rewards us openly and a hundred fold.

PRAYER

“Lord of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things; graft in our hearts the love of thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

BOOKS BY JOHN J. LANIER
PRESS NOTICES AND CONTENTS

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(Published by the Macmillan Co., New York.)

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EXAMINER, NEW YORK, Nov. 30, 1911.—This book is the substance of three lectures delivered at the Virginia Theological Seminary in 1910, expanded and enriched. It is a restatement of Christianity in terms of modern thought. Dr. Lanier is a clear, logical thinker. He knows his ground and stands firmly. His views are fresh and his statements are positive. He does some strong and hearty work in Part II with the Sacraments. It will amply repay reading and study.

THE TRANSCRIPT, BOSTON, Jan. 13, 1912.—This book is notable for its able discussion of theological problems in non-technical language, and the author is especially happy in his illustrations. He writes in a broad spirit . . . and there can be no doubt that his interpretation of Baptism, Apostolical Succession, and the Church, if adopted by his denomination, would be a great step towards church unity.

THE LIVING CHURCH, MILWAUKEE, WIS., Jan. 27, 1912.—We are inclined to believe that Mr. Lanier knows how to approach his readers, how to present to them the great mysteries of the faith in a reasonable way. . . . We repeat our opinion that this book ought to do good, especially if put in the hands of those who are looking for a definite form of belief.

THE GUARDIAN, LONDON, ENG., May 24, 1912.—We are not surprised that the Bishops of Fond du Lac and Atlanta give their warm commendation to this striking book. The former writes an Introduction, in which he rightly speaks of the work as a production "noble in its ideals and novel in its treatment of them." It contains, indeed, speculative theology in the best sense of the term. Too many thinkers yield to the temptations either of inconsiderate rashness or of dull timidity in writing on the great doctrines of the Faith. Mr. Lanier holds fast to the deposit of the Faith, but he brings the illumination of a reverent and most original mind to bear on it. On the dogma of the Virgin Birth of our

Lord, for instance, he has much to say that is of real moment. He approaches it from the point of view that it is not a break in the Divine law, but really the fulfilment of that law, normal and to be expected. On Baptism and the Sacrament of Baptism—there is a distinction between the two terms in Mr. Lanier's treatment—he is singularly clear and cogent; the analogy of the human and Divine births is wonderfully drawn out. It is a thoughtful and suggestive book, and its chapters on "The Sacramental System of the Christian Church" are full of food for thought.

RT. REV. WM. LAWRENCE, BISHOP OF MASSACHUSETTS, Oct. 19, 1911.—It is a contribution worth while. Two features I liked especially, the clear and large way in which you have described the Catholic Church—this must help towards unity—and the fresh way in which you have brought out the Truth of Baptism and the Sacrament of Baptism. I hope the book will have a wide circulation.

SELECTIONS FROM
POEMS: THE LOST PEARL

THE LOST PEARL.

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THE LOST PEARL

This poem is divided into three parts: Youth, Manhood, Age. I give a few selections.

TO ALL POETS

O let us drink their visions in,
And breathe their spirits' fiery breath!
For poets know and feel all things
That men have ever felt before;
Their eyes the Universe do span,
And scale the walls of heaven, too!

. . . ,

THE ANGELS' GIFT TO MAN

In heaven's balmy airs reclining
There were some angels fair as light,
A gift within their hearts divining
To greet the new created's sight.

In dark eyes much deep love expressing,
Uprose the tallest and began:
"This gift from heaven goes confessing
The love the angels bear to man.

“ Since love’s the secret power moving
The soul of all things here above,
With all your kind and sweet approving
We make the heart of this of *love*.”

A soft-robed angel spoke revealing
More her thought with eye than word,
And naught her thought with word concealing
What with applause the others heard:

“ As love’s the sweetest love when bounded
By links that make it ever sure,
The heart of this should be surrounded
With meetest emblem of the *pure*.”

And said another angel rising,
Possessed of youth forever young,
The words to suit her thoughts devising
In softest accents of her tongue:

“ Since love that’s pure must live forever,
As doth her fair twin sister, truth,
Sure from this gift we must not sever
The emblem of eternal *youth*.”

Love, youth, and purity expressing
In one gift passing fair they boast,
Which puts beyond all doubt and guessing
That which the angels love the most.

“ This gift,” said they, “ shall be a flower,
Soft pillowed on the level mere,
Its head above green leaves shall tower,
And lily will we call it here.

“ Its heart shall yellow be exposing,
Its calyx leaves the richest green,
Its petals to the earth disclosing
The purest white that e’er was seen.”

The snow tint from their bosoms taking,
So white and pure in heaven’s air,
They to the petals gave while making,
Creating thus the lily fair.

Adown from heaven swift descending
In Paradise the lily flew:
And Adam o’er Eve softly bending,
Her to his ravished heart he drew;

And to her gaze the lily showing —
The white, the yellow, and the green —
While on her cheek was love's light glowing,
Of flowers all they crowned it queen.

“The yellow, white, and green combining,”
Said they, “bear this blest emblem true:
Of pure young love in one entwining
The lives and loves and hearts of two.”

.

THE SOUTH WIND'S SONG

I

All velvet greens
And purple sheens
I blow
From out the southern seas!
And then I spring on bounding wing
And hist! Iro!
I go!
Away! Away! Away!
All day!

And dance and skip and play
Among the cloves, among the groves,
Of almond laded trees
And sweet scented bees.

II

Ever
And forever
I wander wheresoever
I list to go!
Over
The murmured waters low!
And skip and trip
And gently trip!
The spotless lily's lip
To kiss!

III

Kiss!
Ah! Bliss!
The drooping lily white I kiss!
Her white and spotless lip I kiss!
Ah, bliss! for when her lips I kiss!
All lovely thoughts come here
And there and every where

I roam the rounded sphere
Among
The scented vines and sleeping flowers:
The sweet and gentle flowers
With honeyed nectar
For sweet bees in fairy bowers!

IV

Every where
The broad green earth soe'er
Enchanting spreads!
To where
A youth for love a maiden weds!
Ah there
My softest pinions veer!
And spreading wide them find.
Ah! them I find!
Their lives I bind
With love and flowers twined!
Their lives
With love and flowers
Twined!

.

THE DEATH OF YOUTH

From sleep, or more than sleep, we wake —
If sleep or dreams we call those times,
In which we know ourselves as that
Which most resemble shadow things,
As through the mist of years we plunge!
The rising sun awakes new life:
From death of youth to manhood's strife!

.
Our youth is dead today! To arms!
Our manhood calls for better things
Than we have ever dreamed before!
It shall not call in vain! Away
With false alarms and demon charms!
The world is old and we are young —
The world shall be as young as we!

Then drink we to eternal youth!
To youth renewed from age to age!
Which wars against all ancient wrongs;
All hoary blood red tyrannies,
And modern vested infamies!
God make us one of every tongue!
Our manhood keep forever young!

PLAY THE GAME FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH

That we have let one sigh escape —
We hate ourselves as one weak thing!
A man should mark his course in life,
And hold it ever 'gainst all odds:
Gaunt poverty and ice-eyed death,
And ignorance and heartlessness,
Should be but goads to urge us on!
A man, that is a man manlike,
Should love the strife, and want to fight
The fight that nature deals his soul:
And if we conquer, all is well;
And if we conquer not, 'tis well:
We live the life a man should live!
Success is not the goal of life —
To play the game for what 'tis worth
Is all the great Jehovah asks!

.

THE DEMON DESPAIR

The venom'd and dark demon, grim despair,
Measuring the night of crushing folds
With high-born souls of gifted mean and great;
The moguls, monarch ones of thought and deed,

Who, with the lightning of their radiant minds,
Flash meteoric splendor o'er the earth:
Who show what image God intended man to be!

Thou dost disdain to touch the common ones
Of earth, the sleek ones wrapped in drossy gold;
Those who, with foreheads low and soulless eyes,
Their heads down dropped, do rake the foul muck —
Ah, these, thou snaky sorceress, despair!
Thou dost disdain to touch, beneath thy wiles:
For their despair is but despair of men!

Thou searchest through all ages and all climes
For choicest human victims of the sphere,
And hurlest them into thy dungeon keeps:
The horrors, fits, and pangs thou dealest them
Is all despair: the agony of gods!

But wily, snaky sorceress most vile,
Thy forkéd tongue, and eyeballs glaring hate,
Their damnéd spell cannot forever hold!
For some, the giant ones, will strangle thee;
And pull thy venomed fangs, and blind thy eyes,
And roam the green orbed earth in triumph free!

But o'er the gifted weaker sons of earth,
Death poisoned by the cobrous venom'd fangs,
O weep, ye cycled ages, o'er their graves!
Weep o'er them, weep! Ye cycled ages weep!

.

FAREWELL, MY MIDNIGHT FRIEND

Soft seated on thy waving throne in air!
Fanned by sweet perfumed winds without a care!

Thou king of song! Thou bird divinely blest!
Why dost thou sing when all the world's at rest?

Ah! he, who would thy liquid notes best hear,
Must wake in stillest night and steal anear:

Thou singest to the crowned Queen of sky,
Unconscious of a charmed listener nigh.

Thou singest to her jewelled glittering throng
A perfect note, a faultless tune, and song.

O! thy wayward, changing, and illusive art,
That soothes the aching pain, and charms the heart!

The dancing spirits of the air draw round,
Enraptured by thy music's wondrous sound.

The glowing throng on orange blossoms sit,
And perfumed wreaths upon their brows are fit,

While thou art bid by radiant seraph glance
To softly sing the angel heaven dance!

O thou songster of the queen of night,
And her attendant throng of stars so bright:

O sing! and sing! as ne'er thou sang'st before!
And quell the passions wild, the heart's uproar!

.
And now farewell, my midnight friend of air,
Thou soother of the gnawing cancer, care!

Fling out thy notes full to the whispering wind:
Compel the world to music's power bend!

Breathe thy transforming spell upon the earth,
And charm the world from nation's birth to birth!



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